GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

New Designation _____
Amendment of a previous designation X

Please summarize any amendment(s) Designation of the building's interior common spaces (lobbies, main-floor "promenade" corridors, lounges, dining room, ballroom, and the stairs connecting these spaces to each other)

Property name Kennedy-Warren Apartment Building
*If any part of the **interior** is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 3131-3133 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008

Square and lot number(s) Square 2214, Lots 806 and 807 (formerly Lot 801)

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 3c

Date of construction 1931 Date of major alteration(s) 1935, 2004

Architect(s) Joseph Younger, A. H. Sonnemann Architectural style(s) Art Deco

Original use Residential/Multiple Dwelling Present use Residential/Multiple Dwelling

Property owner The Klingle Corporation

Legal address of property owner 3133 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Art Deco Society of Washington

***If the applicant is an organization**, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) P.O. Box 42722, Washington, D.C. 20015, (202) 298-1100

Name and title of authorized representative Ira Raskin, Treasurer

Signature of representative _____ Date _____

Name and telephone of author of application Marilyn M. Harper (301) 365-3541

Date received 11/02/2009
H.P.O. staff TJD

GENERAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (INTERIOR)

The common spaces at the Kennedy-Warren Apartment Building, at 3131-3133 Connecticut Avenue, NW, are eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C (Architecture) and District of Columbia landmark Criteria D (Architecture and Urbanism) and E (Artistry) as the city's finest example of an Art Deco apartment house interior. The Kennedy-Warren's designation as a D.C. Historic Landmark in 1988 and its listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 recognized the importance of its geometric Art Deco exterior, but in reality, the exterior and interior cannot be separated. Together, they make up a single, fully integrated architectural whole. Architect Joseph Younger applied the same simplified forms and ornate surfaces that he used on the exterior to the lobby, lounges, dining room, elevator lobbies. and corridors. Art Deco elements, freely adapted from Aztec, classical, and other sources, appear even in such small details as the escutcheons and number plates on the doors to individual apartments. This artistic fusion was unprecedented in Washington apartment houses.

Description of Property:

Site

The Kennedy-Warren's roughly 2½-acre site lies on the east side of Connecticut Avenue between the National Zoological Park and the Klingle Bridge. It is in an area that has been a fashionable apartment house corridor since the early 1920s. Surrounded on three sides by protected parkland, the lot looks almost level, but the land actually slopes sharply down from south to north.

Exterior

The D.C. Historic Landmark documentation and the National Register of Historic Places Registration forms described the exterior of the Kennedy-Warren in detail.

Interior

The plan of the existing building is highly irregular. Its main axis runs roughly north-to-south, aligned with Connecticut Avenue. The main entrance is located at the back of a deeply recessed landscaped courtyard framed by projecting wings extending to the lot line. The south wing is in the form of a broad H, with the crossbar parallel to Connecticut Avenue.[1] The north wing consists of back-to-back Es, with their long axis perpendicular to Connecticut Avenue. The central and western sections of the north wing were completed in 1931; the eastern section was added in 1935.[2]

[1] The south wing was designed by Younger, but not built because of the Depression and the bankruptcies of the original owners. The B. F. Saul Company began construction on the present south wing in 2002, generally following Younger's design for the exterior. The new wing is not proposed for designation as part of this amendment.

[2] Because this addition followed Younger's original design, this amendment will make no distinction between the original 1931 spaces and those added in 1935.

Joseph Younger's creative plan placed the main entrance approximately in the center of the building and at the midpoint of the sloping lot. The site for the planned south wing was only about 20 feet above the lobby level, requiring little excavation. The plan for the much larger south and central sections of the building took advantage of the steep slope to include two floors of apartments and common areas below the lobby level, as well as four lower levels devoted to parking and service spaces. Because of the sloping site, these lower levels had outside exposures on the north and east.

This section begins with the lobby level. Descriptions of the lower levels will be next, followed by those of the upper stories. The lower floors will be designated by elevation, as they were in the original plans.

Lobby Level (elev. 210):

The two-story lobby is a complex and dramatic space measuring roughly 24 by 44 feet (see Lobby Floor Plan). A mezzanine that covers almost half the space divides the lobby into two sections. Restoration of the space in 2004 revealed rich, decorative Art Deco finishes beneath many coats of white paint. Entrance to the lobby is through a broad, curving two-story glazed bay. The lower half of the bay originally consisted of five separate exterior doors, each divided vertically into two rows of four panes each (see Historic Photo 1 and Photo 1); the upper level contains five tall narrow windows, divided vertically and filled with pale, stained-glass set in geometric patterns. The two levels are separated by square bronze bas-relief panels. The remainder of the composition is aluminum, originally highly polished. In 2004, a separate inner entrance was installed to create a small vestibule. The inner entrance, also aluminum with inset bas-relief panels, was designed to be compatible with the original exterior entrance.

Tall bay windows, framed by stylized, paneled two-story marble pilasters, are located on either side of the entrance bay. Large piers, finished like the pilasters, support the mezzanine. Highly polished aluminum panels line the inner faces of the piers and cover the exposed edge of the mezzanine floor. An aluminum balustrade featuring swastikas alternating with stylized floral motifs rests on two flat bands of polished aluminum. Exposed beams, lavishly stenciled in abstract patterns and sunbursts, support the ceiling. The colors of the stenciled patterns are somewhat more muted than the original colors revealed by paint analysis. The sides of the beams and the ceiling between them are finished with silvery aluminum foil. The space is lit by a large chandelier and wall sconces mounted on the pilasters; the chandelier replicates the original fixture. Very large mirrors with clipped corners are centered on the north and south walls, flanked by doorways leading to adjacent lounges. The walls are painted to simulate the original flexible Prima Vera veneer paneling.

A broad staircase fills the space between the pilasters under the mezzanine in the lobby and leads down to the lower level (see Photo 2). A bank of two passenger elevators is directly behind the staircase. The elevator doors are decorated with stylized Aztec Deco floral motifs in inlaid metal. The door to Unit 302, a large two-bedroom apartment, is located on the east wall of the elevator lobby.

Long corridors originally known as “promenades” connect the lobby with the north and south wings. All openings on these promenades are framed with the reeded pilasters found in many of the common spaces. The replicated Prima Vera paneling continues here and the shallow barrel vaulted ceilings are finished with gleaming aluminum foil. Two sets of French doors in the west wall of the south promenade provide step-down access to the south lounge. Openings on the east wall originally led to the reception desk, the office, a bank of telephones, a newsstand, and the resident manager’s one bedroom apartment. These areas are now office space. The west wall of the north promenade contains two more sets of French doors. The first leads to the north lounge; the second to the public dining room. Four entrances on the east wall open into spaces once used as shops; these spaces also feature large display windows. A short cross-hall on this wall leads to units 305, an efficiency, and 307, a one-bedroom apartment.

The north and south lounges are large high-ceilinged rooms measuring approximately 23 by 41 feet. Large floor-to-ceiling mirrors are centered on the end walls of both lounges. Rows of six tall casement windows on the east walls of both lounges open to the landscaped entrance courtyard. The windows are separated by smaller versions of the characteristic reeded pilasters topped with large aluminum bas-relief panels. The pairs of reeded semi-engaged columns that frame the two doorways leading to the south promenade have flat, vaguely Egyptian capitals. Most original architectural features survive in both lounges, although some of the details in the north lounge have been covered. The south lounge is presently decorated as a sitting room, probably close to its historic appearance (see Photo 3). The north lounge currently resembles an English gentlemen’s club.

Shallow steps lead from the north promenade down to the dining room, which is located four feet below the lobby. Like the lounges, it is a large (52 by 78 feet) high ceilinged space with long windows overlooking the entrance court. An entrance to the north lounge is located to the east of the windows. “Several modernistically decorated colonnades” partition the northern third of the space off from the main dining area. These “colonnades” consist of three large openings containing pairs of freestanding reeded columns with no bases and distinctive battered square capitals decorated with stenciled patterns (see Photo 4). The flat wall panels between the openings contained large circular mirrors etched with geometric patterns originally.[3] There are two large openings at the west end of the space; one leads to a large kitchen and the other to a cloakroom and a short flight of stairs connecting to a public entrance from the courtyard, “for guests who may not wish to pass through the apartment lobby.”[4]

In addition to the service, storage, and office spaces associated with the dining room, this level includes 17 apartments (the 300 series), ranging in size from efficiencies to two-bedroom units with sun rooms. Because of the sloping lot, all of these apartments have views of Rock Creek Park. Originally, a decorative marquetry door to a service closet was visible at the end of the north promenade; the door survives, but it has been screened by a fire door. An additional passenger elevator is located just to the east of the service closet.

[3] One of these mirrors survives in the elevator lobby on the basement level.
[4] All quotations are from “Kennedy-Warren’s Splendid Cuisine,” *The Washington Post*, September 13, 1931.

Mezzanine Level
This level, accessible only by elevator, is essentially an expanded elevator lobby. It connects with the corridor leading to the apartment units on this floor (the 400 series) and shares the same finishes as the lobby. It currently serves as an informal lounge area, as it may have historically.

Lower Lobby Level (elev. 200):
Most of the lower lobby is devoted to spaces for shops. On this floor there are 19 apartments (the 200 series). The two additional units occupy the area below the dining room service spaces.

Ballroom Level (elev. 190)
The two-story ballroom is an impressive, if rather awkward space (see Photos 5 and 6). Approximately 97 feet long by 52 feet wide, it is divided longitudinally into three sections by rows of four large rectangular piers (see Photo 7). The long sides of the piers face the central dance floor and are divided vertically into three sections. Two panels, banded to suggest stylized quoins, frame a central area. The quoins step forward at the top, suggesting the ziggurat shape so characteristic of this phase of Art Deco. The L-shaped spaces thus created are filled with golden bronze bas-relief panels of classically draped dancers. The flat panels between the quoins are reeded and finished in silvery aluminum foil. Replacement Art Deco-type wall sconces are centered on the panels. Narrow bands at the tops of the piers are stenciled with decorative geometric patterns and large quarter round moldings fill the corners between the piers and the heavy longitudinal beam they support. The moldings and the lower surfaces of the beams are covered with aluminum foil. The end piers in each row are larger and more elaborate than the ones in the center. Tall niches with cropped corners, echoing the shape of the large mirrors in the lobby, are set into the wide reeded central panels. Non-historic wall sconces are located on either side of the niches.

The central area of the ballroom is unobstructed and retains its original wooden dance floor. The dance floor continues unbroken into the area defined by the northern row of piers. Aluminum foil covers the lower surfaces of the exposed ceiling beams in both areas and continues in a narrow band up the sides; stenciled geometric patterns decorate the area above the band. The area defined by the south row of piers consists of a raised balcony, probably originally used for table seating. An aluminum railing decorated with small round brass bas-reliefs protects the edge of the balcony.

A raised bandstand is located at the west end of the ballroom. Its curving back wall is decorated with applied molding. A single very large reeded column with no base and no capital separates the bandstand from a broad staircase that leads up to double doors and to the same exterior door that serves the dining room. Guests eating in the dining room could proceed directly down the stairs to the ballroom. A corridor to the north of the bandstand leads to a serving pantry.

The east wall also contains a wide staircase. This leads up to a lounge with checkroom and, eventually, to the lower lobby. Another large reeded column stands next to the staircase. Tall rectangular bronze foil panels topped with shallow bronze bas-reliefs of satyrs divide the rest of the wall into three sections. A very large multi-pane mirror, framed by slender reeded pilasters, is in the center of this wall.

This level also includes 18 apartments (the 100 series).

B Level (elev. 180)
The driveway, garage, receiving, and storage areas take up most of this level. Originally, it also contained apartments for two live-in janitors, a large servants' hall, and 22 small rooms for maids. The janitors' apartments, the laundry, and the maids' rooms had outside windows. Tenants could rent the maids' rooms by the month for their personal servants. Only two of these rooms survive; the space once occupied by the others has been incorporated into the garage.

1B Level (elev. 169.4)
Except for a space next to the elevators, originally used as a carpenter's shop, this level is entirely taken up by the parking garage.

2B Level (elev 159)
The lowest part of the 200-car garage is on this level, along with what was originally a very large coal storage bin. The main passenger elevator does not reach this level, but residents can use the north elevator to go directly from their cars to their apartments.

3B Level (elev. 144)
The enormous pieces of equipment that provided heating and cooling are located on this level. The two-story boiler room on the west originally contained three large boilers for heat, two hot water heaters, and an incinerator. The eastern end was open to the outside, so the huge fans housed there could draw cool air from the Klingle Valley and force it through the building to provide air circulation. A large space near the north passenger elevator, originally used as a recreation room, currently provides common storage for tenants. An outside door that residents could use to access Rock Creek Park is also located at this level.

Floors Five through Eleven (500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, and 1100 series)
The typical floor at the Kennedy-Warren contains 33 apartments: 12 one-room efficiencies, 15 one-bedroom, five two-bedroom, and one three-bedroom unit (see Typical Floor Plan). Tiers 01 through 08 and 17 through 32 were included in the original construction; tiers 03, 09 through 16, and 33 were added in 1935. The efficiencies and small one-bedroom units open directly from the long corridors. The larger units are located at the ends of the main corridor and on short cross-corridors. This arrangement provides many units with more than one exposure. Some of the one-bedroom units and all of the larger units have more than one bathroom and some of the larger two-bedroom units have separate dining rooms.[5]

[5] Some of the one-bedroom units also contained sunrooms; these small rooms are not counted as bedrooms for

The interiors of the apartments are well finished, but simple. All have plaster walls over hollow terra cotta tile and hardwood floors, except in the kitchens and baths. The windows are standard eight-over-eight or four-over-four double hung sash; the historic windows have been replaced in kind. The finishes in the units are more traditional than those in the more public common spaces (see Photo 8). This is particularly apparent in the large two-bedroom units, where the fireplace mantels in the living rooms are Colonial Revival.

The long corridors connecting the apartments at the Kennedy-Warren are unusually wide and Younger used a number of visual strategies to break up their apparent length (see Photo 9). Intersections with cross corridors are defined by broad handsomely proportioned arched openings. Decorative beams are located at regular intervals. The beams are paneled on the bottom and supported where they meet the wall by large quarter-round moldings, somewhat similar to those in the ballroom.

Cool air circulated by the huge fans in the basement still flows into each corridor through large vents. The air passes into the individual units through smaller vents located over the doors to each unit; the size of the vent is proportional to the unit's size. Unit doors are a bright veneer, inlaid with a thin strip of darker wood that defines their central area. The angular bronze escutcheons for the door handles suggest ziggurats; the aluminum number plates feature floral motifs (see Photos 10 and 11). Many units have service doors off their kitchens. The finishes on these doors are the same as those on the main doors, although the hardware is not as elaborate. Two small doors next to the service doors open to pass-through spaces where tradesmen could leave milk, bread, and other deliveries. Tenants could retrieve their deliveries through matching doors on the inside of their units.

Statement of Integrity

The Kennedy-Warren Apartment building maintains an astoundingly high level of integrity. Changes have been few and the percentage of historic fabric is exceptionally high. All of the common spaces had been unsympathetically repainted many times over the years, but most of the historic architectural features survive. Few elements had to be replicated during 2004 restoration of the lobby and paint analysis uncovered many original decorative finishes. The dining room and ballroom have not been well maintained, but here, too, original features remain largely intact and historic surface treatments may survive under the present white paint. The elevator cabs have been replaced, but the elevator doors and the corridors appear to be virtually unchanged. Even the huge boilers and air circulating fans on the lowest level may be original.

Joseph Younger's original plan for both the common and private spaces in this precedent-setting building survives virtually unaltered, and conversations with residents suggest that few changes have been made in most of the units. The installation of new appliances in the kitchens required the removal of some of the manufactured kitchen cabinets, but most survive. Bathroom tile and most bath fixtures are original. The units and the upstairs halls are not

the purposes of this amendment. There is no 13 tier, but there is a 10A tier, for reasons that are not clear.

proposed to be designated part of this nomination, but they nonetheless demonstrate the building's high integrity overall.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (INTERIOR)

In his path-breaking 1988 book *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses*, James Goode called the Kennedy-Warren "the finest Art Deco apartment house ever built in the city." He pointed out that many late 1920s-early 1930s apartment houses concentrated their Art Deco detailing around the entrances, but that at the Kennedy-Warren these details "carried through the façade to unite the entire structure." What he did not say, though he could have, was that the Art Deco influence extended to the entire interior, perhaps in even more dramatic form than on the exterior.[6]

The Kennedy-Warren is also significant as an exceptionally intact illustration of the evolution of the apartment house building type in Washington. Its plan was a brilliant adaptation of the "suburban" apartment house layout to a difficult site. The popularity of its many small apartments dramatically demonstrated that the demand for luxury apartments in Washington was not limited to the rich. Washington's rapidly expanding middle class, including the many new government employees brought to the city by the New Deal, enthusiastically welcomed the building's combination of elegant common spaces and small apartments. Its appeal to women living alone was particularly strong. The Kennedy-Warren's innovative system of "air cooling," the first in the nation, provided the air circulation so critical for comfortable apartment house living. Systems like this one were installed in over ten other apartment houses built before central air conditioning became standard.

Historical Narrative:
The plot that experienced developers Edgar S. Kennedy and Monroe Warren, Sr., bought on the north side of Connecticut Avenue between the National Zoo and the Klingle Bridge had many advantages. It was located on the Connecticut Avenue streetcar line with easy access to downtown Washington. It was in Washington's first fashionable apartment house section. It was surrounded on three sides by protected park land. It was probably relatively cheap to buy, but this advantage was closely tied to its principal disadvantage. Its steep slope—the north side was originally 80 feet below the high point at the south corner—made construction difficult and expensive.

The building permit and Younger's original floor plans show that the Kennedy-Warren was originally intended to be an apartment-hotel. An admiring article on American apartment houses published in *The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* in 1925 defined apartment hotels as,

[6] James M. Goode, *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses, With a New Preface* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988 [Preface 2003]), 307.

> buildings in which the functions of hotels are combined with those of apartments, the principal feature being that although the management takes over many of the worries and responsibilities of service, the apartments, although small, are capable of being made into a comfortable home in which the occupants can live their own lives in privacy.[7]

Apartment hotels, like the Wardman Park, the Mayflower, and the Shoreham, were popular in Washington, particularly with members of Congress and others who lived in the city for only part of the year.[8]

Although plans to build an apartment hotel were abandoned before the Kennedy-Warren opened in 1931, the original intention probably contributed to the many small apartments, their compact and efficient layouts, and the unusually large and elaborate common spaces. Many luxury apartment houses had public dining rooms, for instance, but few provided ballrooms.[9] The building also functioned much like an apartment hotel. Residents could eat in the public dining room or order their meals through room service. They could entertain their friends in the spacious lounges. They could sponsor private parties or dances in the ballroom.[10]

The Kennedy-Warren's origin as an apartment hotel may also explain the marked contrast between the sophisticated Art Deco common spaces and the conservative Colonial Revival unit interiors. While Art Deco was popular for commercial buildings, the Colonial Revival was closely identified with "the home qualities" that architect R. W. Sexton thought residents of apartment hotels were seeking. According to an advertisement published in *The Washington Post* in 1933, the Kennedy-Warren was "luxurious . . . but comfortable . . . homelike."[11]

The Kennedy-Warren Apartment Building opened October 1, 1931. The first listing in *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* was in 1932. It shows only 163 residents for the 210-unit building. The remaining 47 units may well have been vacant in what was probably the worst year of the Depression in Washington. By 1933, vacancies had fallen to 19 and the 1934 *Directory* showed only five.[12] These impressive numbers undoubtedly contributed to the decision of B. F Saul, who took over the property after the sudden bankruptcies of the original owners in late 1931, to hire architect Alexander H. Sonnemann to complete the "new" east wing in 1935 following Younger's original design.

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[7] "Recent Developments in Apartment Housing in America—Part II," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (18 July 18, 1925), 540.
[8] Goode, *Best Addresses*, 190.
[9] Goode, *Best* Addresses, 19, 151, 159, 197, 209, 261, 303, 284. Other than the Kennedy-Warren, only two Washington apartment houses are known to have had ballrooms, Tilden Gardens and McLean Gardens. A ballroom was planned for the Westchester but never built. All other ballrooms were in buildings that functioned as apartment hotels.
[10] The cost of furnishing the 50 hotel units planned for the Kennedy-Warren may have played a role in the abandonment of the apartment hotel scheme.
[11] R. W. Sexton, *American Apartment Houses, Hotels and Apartment Hotels of Today: Exterior and Interior Photographs and Plans* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1929), n.p.; display ad, *The Washington Post,* August 6, 1933.
[12] *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: W. H. Boyd), 1932, 1933, 1934.

By this time, the Kennedy-Warren was recognized as one of the city's most distinguished apartment houses. Nearby apartments and housing developments advertised their proximity to the Kennedy-Warren as an indication of the "exclusive section" where they were located. The society pages of *The Washington Post* chronicled the comings and goings of its residents. The ballroom was busy with dances, often given by the city's many active state societies. Vacancies were virtually unknown throughout the remainder of the building's history. In 1943, at the height of the World War II housing shortage, 5,000 people were on the waiting list for apartments. Tenants in 1948 included "at least 14 generals, 6 admirals, District Court justices, congressmen, and officials in government, business, finance, church, and social circles." The Kennedy-Warren's public dining room continued in operation until the early 1990s, and popular swing dances were held in its ballroom. The Klingle Corporation, a subsidiary of the B. F. Saul Company, still owns the Kennedy-Warren and continues to operate it as a rental building.[13]

Together, the Kennedy-Warren's interior spaces represent both one of the city's most sophisticated and successful "suburban" apartment house plans and a landmark in the evolution of the apartment house building type. Younger's decision to wrap private apartments around the large common rooms on the lower levels of the building was a brilliant response to a steeply sloping lot. It provided the owners with extra rentable space, while still giving the residents of these units fresh air and views of the surrounding protected woodlands. The plan's combination of home-like apartments, most of them compact efficiency and one-bedroom units, with sophisticated hotel-like common rooms is one of the Kennedy-Warren's character-defining features. The building's social and economic success among middle- and upper middle-class Washingtonians, particularly single women, encouraged and accelerated the trend towards smaller units, even in luxury apartment houses.

Areas of Significance

Architecture (Art Deco)

There are as many definitions of the eclectic and amorphous style known as "Art Deco" as there are books about it. Spiro Kostof in his *History of Architecture* called it,

> A crowd-pleasing indiscriminate playfulness that borrowed loosely from a variety of sources, from Mayan forms and Frank Lloyd Wright, from the machine aesthetic of progressive European designers and the 1925 Paris fair, the *Exposition des Art Décoratifs et Industriels*, from which the style gets it customary name—Art Deco. In a short time [in the 1920s] a whole vocabulary of angular and curvilinear forms was developed; none of it related to historical styles. Rendered in metal, terra cotta or some other bright veneer, this ornament was woven into exterior walls, spread out in entrance lobbies, and elevator

[13] Classified ad, *The Washington Post*, August 8, 1935; "In Exclusive Woodley Park," classified ad, *The Washington Post*, August 25, 1935; "Directory of the Capital's Most Desirable Apartments," *The Washington Post*, August 7, 1936; "Oklahoma Society Banquet Saturday, "*The Washington Post*, January 29, 1933; "Reception at Hotel to Honor Alabama's Congress Group," *The Washington Post*, January 13, 1935; "Maryland Club Dance Attracts More than 100," *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1935; "Kennedy-Warren Rents Protested," [Washington] *Times-Herald*, March 24, 1948.

> areas. . . .We can find these zestful Art Deco flourishes in the commercial buildings of most large cities—zigzags and dense floral fields, faceted crystalline forms, stripings of various sorts, in glass, and tiled mosaic and brass, often cheerfully juxtaposed.[14]

The restored lobby probably gives a good sense of the visual richness that once filled all of the common spaces. This is not the streamlined Art Deco of the 1930s. Combining simplified forms with ornately decorated surfaces, the lobby directly reflects the influence of the 1925 Paris exhibit. Richly patterned marble covers the smooth paneled pilasters. Sleek polished aluminum contrasts with matte finished faux Prima Vera walls. Aluminum bas-reliefs shimmer on the walls. Art Deco architects loved pale, reflective aluminum, which they used in both matte and polished forms. The Kennedy-Warren was the first apartment house to feature the new metal prominently in its design.

An article published in *The Washington Post* in September 1931 suggests that finishes in the dining room once may have been as elaborate as those in the lobby. Most of the "picturesque Japanese mirrors" on the walls are gone, but the "silver and gold" ceiling may survive under the current white paint.[15]

Art Deco's fascination with the exotic shows in the Aztec details of the lobby and the ballroom, but perhaps most dramatically in the very abstracted floral designs on the elevator doors in the lobby. Swastikas, associated with Far Eastern and Native American cultures before World War II, form the dramatic stair rail in the lobby. The bold quarter-round moldings that fill the corners of piers, beams, and walls seem to reflect an industrial esthetic.

Kostof's statement that Art Deco forms were unrelated to historical styles does not apply in the case of the Kennedy-Warren, however. Freely interpreted classical elements are everywhere in Joseph Younger's design, from the odd paneled pilasters in the lobby to the huge reeded columns in the ballroom. Younger made no attempt at historical accuracy in these forms. Columns in the ballroom and dining room have no bases, resting flat on the floor. Capitals are simple painted bands or battered squares echoing no classical order.

Kostof's "crowd-pleasing indiscriminate playfulness" is most obvious in the ballroom, a space for dancing. Shiny bronze classical bas-reliefs fill the spaces created by the ziggurat shapes at the tops of the piers. Here the stylized baseless reeded columns are combined with signs of the emerging streamlined Art Deco in the rounded windows and striping on the back wall of the bandstand.

It is the juxtaposition of these various influences that best illustrates the cheerful eclecticism that is at the heart of Art Deco. Elements from different eras and different esthetics appear next to each other in the same spaces. The escutcheons on the apartment doors are angular

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[14] Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 716.
[15] "Kennedy-Warren's Splendid Cuisine," "Kennedy Warren Section," special supplement to *The Washington Post*, September 13, 1931.

Aztec Deco; the number plates are floral. The heavy quarter round moldings supporting the cross beams in the corridors are shaped into many narrow beveled layers and suggest industrial objects, but the motif at the center of the round is a flower.

Architecture (Apartment House Building Type)

"Suburban" plans

The Kennedy-Warren possesses one of Washington's most creative, complex, and successful "suburban" apartment house plans. The 1920s was a boom period in apartment house construction, with developers working furiously to build accommodations for Washington's rapidly rising population. One of the most important trends during this period was the development of large complexes covering only a small portion of their irregular landscaped lots. The plans of these buildings were often equally irregular, with many short wings providing multiple exposures for most apartments. These "suburban" apartment houses were popular with both tenants and owners. In many cases, developers could buy irregular lots at reduced rates and leaving open spaces around the buildings often increased rentals and reduced expensive turnover. As architect Frank Chouteau Brown suggested in 1922,

> Just as the advertiser has come gradually to realize that sometimes a dexterous use of white space will give him far better returns that an area carefully filled with type, so has the owner of real estate come gradually to appreciate that it is after all a pretty good investment for him to leave a certain portion of his property uncovered by floor area.[16]

All suburban apartment houses in Washington were influenced by developer Harry Wardman's design for the Wardman Park Hotel, completed in 1918. Based loosely on the Homestead resort in Hot Springs, Virginia, the irregular building filled only a small portion of its hilly, landscaped 10-acre site. Four years later, Wardman built Cathedral Mansions, the first suburban apartment house complex in the city, also on Connecticut Avenue.

When Kennedy and Warren hired Joseph Younger to design their new apartment hotel, his job, like that of any other apartment house architect, was "to obtain the most use and income from the available area and proportions of the lot."[17] Younger had already designed other buildings in Washington. R. W. Sexton's important 1926 book on American apartment houses featured two of Younger's designs: the Randolph Apartments at 14th and Randolph streets, NW, and 1661 Crescent Place, NW, also developed by Monroe Warren.[18] The Crescent Place building, with its irregular plan and hilltop site, probably provided useful experience for his new assignment.

Younger's design succeeded in turning a difficult lot to an advantage for owners and residents alike. Only nine stories in front, to conform to the height limit imposed by zoning, the building

[16] Goode, *Best Addresses*, 173; quote from Frank Chouteau Brown, "Tendencies in Apartment House Design," part 6, *The Architectural Record*, vol. 50 (July-December 1921), 502-3.
[17] Brown, "Tendencies in Apartment House Design," part 4, *The Architectural Record*, vol. 50 (July-December 1921), 199.
[18] R. W. Sexton, *American Apartment Houses of Today* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1926) n.p.

was 15 stories high on the back, including 11 floors of apartments. Younger's plan thus managed to maximize the amount of rentable space while providing fresh air and pleasant views for every unit. B. F. Saul's decision not to alter the original plan in 1935 addition testifies to its success.

Small apartments

Before World War I, luxury apartment houses in Washington and other cites were "meant to attract families that could afford to buy a residential house if they chose to do so."[19] The apartments were very large, often only one or two to a floor. They contained many bedrooms, spaces designed for large-scale entertaining, and usually rooms for servants. They were also elaborately finished, with parquet floors, crown moldings, decorative fireplaces, and lobbies encrusted with details executed in marble and other fine materials.

During the 1920s, when Washington became an "apartment city," the size of apartments steadily decreased, even in luxury buildings. By the end of the decade, the average apartment in Washington consisted of three rooms; ten years before it had been four. Rapid increases in the cost of construction following the end of World War I and the perennially high cost of living in Washington contributed to this change, as did developers' interest in increasing the return on their investments.[20]

Owners used many ingenious techniques to increase the appeal of these small apartments. One way was to make rooms do double duty. In 1922, Frank Brown described a disappearing bed that could convert a living room into a bedroom at night. The bed "folds up into an upright position and is so installed upon a pivot that it can be swung back and around into a closet, where it remains snugly ensconced during the day." The Murphy bed, invented in 1918 in California, was the best known of these. Manufactured china cabinets could separate a single room into a dining alcove and kitchen. Mass-produced kitchen cabinets and counter units could create a working kitchen in a very small space. Built-in wardrobes could turn large closets into private dressing rooms.[21] This new equipment made it possible to create full housekeeping units that consisted of only one large room, with a combined kitchen/dining alcove on one side and a dressing room/bath on the other.[22]

The Kennedy-Warren incorporated all of these important developments. It contained an unusually high proportion of small apartments, more than 80 percent of the units in 1935. The 108 efficiency apartments accounted for over one third of the total and the 156 one-bedroom

[19] C. W. Westfall, "From Homes to Towers: A Century of Chicago's Best Hotels and Tall Apartment Buildings," in *Chicago Architecture 1872-1922: Birth of a Metropolis* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), 269
[20] "Washington Is Apartment City," *The* [Washington] *Evening Star*, December 14, 1929; Goode, *Best Addresses*, 184.
[21] Frank Chouteau Brown, "Tendencies in Apartment House Design," pt. 7, *The Architectural Record*, vol. 51 (January-June 1922), 76; "Murphy Door Bed Company, Inc.," promotional brochure, Historical Society of Washington D.C., James M. Goode Apartment House Research Collection, 1880-1988, MS 366, "Murphy Bed" folder; ""Profitable Residential Planned around the "White" Efficiency Apartment," advertisement, *Pencil Points*, Vol. 5, no. 11 (November 1924), 141.
[22] Sexton, *American Apartment Houses*, 167-168.

units accounted for almost half. These proportions were exceeded in only three of the 29 1920s apartment houses discussed in Goode's *Best Addresses*. Almost all of the apartments, even some of the 14 two-bedroom units, had dining alcoves and kitchens separated by china cabinets. The built-in cabinets in the kitchens, Napanee Dutch Kitchenettes, manufactured by Coppes Bros. & Zook, in Napanee, Indiana, were brought to the site and installed without the need for expensive custom cabinetry. There were large built-in wardrobes in the walk-in closets in the efficiency apartments. All efficiencies and some of the one-bedroom units were outfitted with Murphy beds; a few still survive.

Not all apartment house developers in Washington approved of small apartments. When the apartment house at 2101 Connecticut Avenue, NW, opened in 1928, it proudly boasted that "The character of the tenancy is assured through careful selection of guests. The elimination of small apartments carries with it assurance of a permanent, quiet, and socially attractive atmosphere."[23]

Kennedy and Warren's decision to concentrate on small apartments turned out to be an inspired one, although they lost the property before they could profit from their foresight. Washington's middle class developed a taste for apartment living in the 1930s and hundreds of "dollar-a-year men" and young professionals arrived in the mid-1930s to work for Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration. The small apartments at the Kennedy-Warren, combined as they were with elegant common rooms and hotel services, appealed to both of these groups. After a rather slow start, the building was virtually fully occupied by 1934. Three of the five vacant apartments in that year were two-bedroom units and in later years, vacancies in large units were much more common than those in small ones. The Kennedy-Warren rarely needed to list its apartments in the classified ads in *The Washington* Post in the 1930s and 40s, but when they did it was almost always a two- or three-bedroom unit.[24]

The Depression certainly contributed to the popularity of small apartments. People who once could have afforded large units had to retrench. Some Kennedy-Warren residents who moved from one-bedroom units to efficiencies may have done so to economize. On the other hand, money does not seem to have been a serious problem for some tenants, even those living in small apartments. Dr. and Mrs. John Hooe Iden, for instance, sponsored the debut of their ward, Barbara Baker, in 1935, with a tea dance, presumably in the ballroom. The following year they entertained about 20 "members of the younger set" in their one-bedroom unit. Mrs. John Curry, whose portrait appeared in *the Washington Post* identified as "a popular hostess of the younger set," lived with her husband in another one-bedroom unit.[25]

The small units at the Kennedy-Warren attracted a high proportion of women, both widows and single women. According to the 1932 *Directory*, women occupied 42 percent of the units. Of the 15 residents who moved into their apartments in 1932 and were still there in 1943, 12 were

[23] Cited in Goode, *Best Addresses*, 263.
[24] *The Washington Post*, classified ads, April 7, 1935, April 14, 1935, February 9, 1936.
[25] "Barbara Baker Makes Her Bow to D. C. Society," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 1935; "Mrs. Knowlton and Son Entertained by Idens," *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1936; *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1936.

women. Single middle-class women looking for comfortable, socially respectable lodging in Washington had few options in the 1930s. Houses, even small ones, and luxury apartments were both larger and more expensive than these women wanted or needed. Ordinary apartment buildings were apparently not quite respectable and boarding houses, even good ones, provided little privacy and no possibility for entertaining friends. Many of these women lived in efficiency apartments, but they could receive their friends proudly in the Kennedy-Warren's elegant lounges and dining room.[26]

The Kennedy-Warren proved that small apartments were entirely compatible with a "permanent, quiet, and socially attractive atmosphere." The social and commercial success of the Kennedy-Warren certainly contributed to the growing acceptance of small apartments in Washington. When building resumed in the city in the late 1930s, many of the new apartment houses, like the 1938 Gwenwood, consisted only of small units, mostly efficiencies.

Technology

Providing cross ventilation for large apartment buildings was one of the most difficult challenges that architects for this building type had to face, but it "often spell[ed] the difference between partial failure and complete success.[27] Because most individual units in large buildings were located on either side of long corridors, the possibilities for natural air circulation were limited. Light wells helped solve the problem on city lots. Louvered outer doors that made it possible to leave interior doors open at night were popular in middle class apartment houses, but obviously created problems of privacy. One of the appeals of the suburban apartment house was that its many short wings created apartments with two or even three exposures.

The Kennedy-Warren's ingenious system of "air cooling," the first in the country, circulated cool air from the bottom of the adjacent Klingle Valley through the whole building. Prominently featured in all advertisements for the building, the system effectively countered the stifling heat of a Washington summer. During the late 1930s, more than ten apartment houses in the city adopted air cooling; the 1937 building at 2929 Connecticut drew its cool air from Rock Creek Park. These systems continued in use until the 1950s, when central air-conditioning came to be considered a necessity in Washington. Still functioning as it was designed to do, the system continues to provide fresh air to all the apartments at the Kennedy-Warren.

[26] These numbers are based on *Directory* listings that are unmistakably women's names; because no tenants identified only by initials are included, the actual proportion of women residents is probably somewhat higher. Eight of the women who stayed in their units from 1932 to 1943 lived in efficiencies.
[27] Brown, "Tendencies in Apartment House Design," part 7, 65.

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